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# Using the Integrated Developmental Model of Supervision in a Vocational Counseling Setting

Viviana Garza, Ph.D., LSSP  
Pharr-San-Juan Alamo Independent School District  
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

### Abstract

This paper proposes a concept of supervision at a vocational counseling setting. Using the Integrated Developmental Model with triadic supervision for trainees employed at YGS Placement Service agency will facilitate client welfare and counselor in training development. Along with supervision comes evaluating and assessing trainees' competence. Using the Counseling Competency Scale, the Supervisee Levels Questionnaire-Revised, and reflective journaling will benefit the supervision experience. Determining the level of development of trainees using the integrated development model is the first step to organize and plan the supervision meetings.

*Keywords:* integrated developmental model, triadic supervision, vocational counseling, trainee, clinical supervision

## Using the Integrated Developmental Model of Supervision in a Vocational Counseling Setting

The act of supervision has evolved since its beginnings with Hippocrates (c. a. 400 BC). The Hippocratic Oath mentions how crucial supervision has been to professions speaking about the strong bond that trainees and supervisors or teachers must develop. As the counseling profession has improved, it moved away from utilizing psychotherapy theory in supervision to using other models (Pearson, 2006). Supervision has elicited the formation of multiple developmental and process models of supervision, making the experience more purposeful, organized, and easier to learn and evaluate for both the supervisor and trainee (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Goodyear & Bernard, 1978; Pearson, 2006). Hence, counseling supervision in a vocational counseling setting requires specific set of skills such as organization, cognition, emotion, and learning for the benefit of counselors and their clients (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2011). This paper proposes a supervision concept using triadic supervision for vocational counselor trainees at a vocational counseling setting applying the integrated developmental model (IDM) of supervision.

### Supervision

Primarily, it is important to understand what supervision is and the scope it entails. Bernard and Goodyear (2009) proposed the following definition:

*‘Clinical supervision is an intervention that is provided by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative and hierarchical, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the junior*

*member(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients she, he, or they see(s), and serving as a gatekeeper for ... the particular profession’.*

Similarly, the American Counseling Association (ACA, 2014) states that supervision involves a formal process of alliance between a person in-training, intern, or novice professional of mental health counseling with an experienced professional in counseling or related field. The alliance between supervisor and trainee is to reinforce learning, develop knowledge, promote responsibility of practice, and competence for the benefit of not only the counselor in training but their clients. (Bowers, 1998; Enlow et al., 2019). Supervision has several functions and they include formative, normative, and restorative functions. First, formative function of supervision relates to the fostering of trainee development that includes evaluative and hierarchical aspects. Normative function involves gatekeeping and client welfare. The third function is restorative in nature since it allows the counselor to express concerns to meet personal and professional needs avoiding burnout (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Proctor, 1986).

In order to foster communication and build better rapport with trainees, triadic supervision has shown to provide excellent opportunities to learn among trainees. Triadic supervision is when supervision occurs between one supervisor and two trainees; this is still considered individual supervision (Fickling et al., 2017). This way of supervision has been latent since 2001 when the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) approved it as an alternative to individual supervision. Notwithstanding the risk of nondisclosure among the trainees, triadic supervision can

take the form of split-focus in which the supervision time is divided among the two trainees or single focus in which trainees take turns at different sessions presenting their work or concerns (Minton, 2019; Nguyen, 2004). Hein and Lawson's (2008) qualitative study of six supervisors providing triadic supervision revealed surprising advantages. They reported that some supervisors were able to be less directive and more facilitative in their interactions with trainees. This was evident when trainees had different perspectives and were willing to challenge each other. Supervisors reported that when this challenging of ideas happened it was an indicator that the trainees were taking responsibility for their own learning.

Further, to be able to comply with supervision functions, it is imperative that supervisors use one of the diverse models of supervision. This allows the supervisor to use aspects of the model with the purpose of organizing the experience and complementing supervision to benefit the development of collaboration, learning, cognition, emotion, and alliance between the supervisor and trainees (Stoltenberg et al., 2014; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2011). Utilizing the IDM allows the supervisor to develop a personalized model for each trainee facilitating supervision and the collaboration of among the trainees.

### **Integrated Developmental Model**

IDM is the most integrated and widely used model of supervision since it has the virtue of having two qualities; its first quality is being descriptive as it regards to trainee processes and its second quality is being prescriptive as it regards to supervisor interventions (Zeligman, 2017). The model involves four stages or levels. Each stage evolves through three structures assessing professional growth (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). The first structure is self-other awareness and it involves cognitive and

affective awareness. The trainee becomes aware of the client's world. The components of cognition and affective responses are related to the thought processes across levels and awareness of changes in emotions. Motivation is the second structure and it encompasses the interests and investment spent in training and practice. The third structure of the IDM is autonomy and it reflects the level of independence the trainee exhibits (McNeill & Stoltenberg, 2016).

As the trainee advances through the levels, eight domains are developed. They are intervention skills competence; confidence in administering assessments; assessment of interpersonal issues; conceptualization of consumer's history, diagnosis, and characteristics. Trainees become aware of individual differences such as understanding cultural and ethnic influences on consumers; theoretical orientation is developed; and treatment plans and goals are developed. Lastly, professional ethics culminate fusing with personal ethics (McNeill & Stoltenberg, 2016; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). Trainees do not necessarily begin in the first level as competencies vary across individuals. Determining which the trainee's developmental level within each domain is primordial to plan supervision sessions accordingly (Stoltenberg et al., 2014).

### **Counseling**

Counseling can be basically defined as assistance or guidance for personal problems provided by a professional. However, for a long time there was not a succinct definition of what counseling represented. The formation of many counseling associations defined the profession but did not have a formal definition of what counseling was. Delegates from the most representative counseling associations in the United States collaborated for over two years to define counseling with a 21-word definition. "Counseling is a professional relationship

that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals" (Kaplan et al., 2014). Counseling is a collaborative alliance among the counselor and client. Collaboration assists to identify goals and solutions to problems. Counseling sessions can improve communication and self-esteem, assists in developing coping skills, and promote behavior modification for optimal mental health (Dik et al., 2019). Depending on the organization counseling varies upon their specialty or area of focus.

### **Vocational Counseling**

Vocational counseling is one of the various types of counseling available and it began as a desperate need in society due to economic issues. World War I and the industrialization era brought new machinery that took the place of people; while others were returning from war with physical deformities, amputated limbs, and psychological problems, aspects that made finding a job more difficult than for those with no disability highlighted the need for vocational counseling. At that time, counselors had in hand a different and complex problem to tackle and since then, vocational counseling has taken a different toll for the benefit of people with any kind of disability (Pope, 2000). As overall society and personal views keep changing, vocational counseling seems to be evolving into a psychosocial field in which vocational counselors help people to relate their meaning of life to a career path (Dik et al., 2019; Dik et al., 2015). Therefore, vocational counseling can be defined as an ongoing interaction between counselor and client with the primary focus on vocational assistance or work-related issues (Swanson, 1995). Vocational counseling may be considered personal counseling underskirt by the same fundamental theories and practice methods as any counseling in general (Dik et al., 2015; Pope, 2000; Swanson, 1995).

***YGS Placement Service.*** The YGS Placement Service is a privately held company located in McAllen, Texas. Their services extend to the surrounding counties of Hidalgo, Cameron, Starr, and Willacy. This organization primarily operates in the employment agencies business and industry within the business services sector (YGS Placement Service, n.d.). They employ students from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) undergoing practicum and internship phase in the Rehabilitation Counseling master's program. As interns/trainees, they provide vocational counseling services for those clients referred by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). YGS Placement Service Agency's referrals primarily and solely are from TWC.

Trainees at YGS provide vocational adjustment and job readiness training, job development and placement, job coaching, and supported employment. Vocational adjustment addresses personal and social issues that are pivotal in finding and procuring a job. Job readings regards technical skills necessary for successful job search and placement such as completing applications, building resumes, and review of interview techniques are among the provision of their services. Clients learn how to network and search for jobs by proper job search techniques. Once personal and social needs are addressed, vocation assessment is provided. This allows to develop an individualized plan designed to assist clients in finding the most appropriate place and/or type of job skills.

### ***Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).***

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the state agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to job seekers and employers of Texas. TWC is part of [Texas Workforce Solutions](#), a local and statewide network comprised of the agency, 28 workforce development boards,

and their contracted service providers and community partners. Their mission is to promote and support a workforce system that creates value and offers individuals, communities, and employers the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity. For job seekers, TWC offers career development information, job-search resources, and training programs such as those provided by YGS Placement Service agency where referred clients receive intensive assistance to overcome barriers to employment. For employers, TWC offers recruiting, training, and retraining, outplacement services, assistance recruiting and retaining qualified employees with disabilities (Texas Workforce Commission [TWC], 2017).

### **Effective Counseling and Supervision: Shared Meaning**

Provision of effective vocational counseling at YGS and provision of effective trainee supervision have a shared meaning. To provide the best and effective services by trainees at YGS effective supervision must take place. Research suggests that counselor's competence is associated with supervision experience (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). The training of novice vocational counselors occurs while exposed to clients and most importantly during supervision as it is a significant element for competence development of a vocational counselor (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Sumerel & Borders, 1995). Clients at YGS are referred by TWC due to limitations in job seeking and lack of job skills; therefore, being competent in providing the services clients need is primordial for successful results.

In developing a concise and organized plan while using the IDM in triad supervision it is important to consider the level of counselor, in this case, trainee development. Those providing services as YGS are generally entry-level students, in practicum

or internship phase of the Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling; therefore, are high in motivation but high in anxiety and fearful of evaluation as well. Thus, counselors in training will require facilitative interventions such as providing encouragement and support. Structure with trainees in level 1 is imminent in the supervision experience. It must include prescriptive interventions, that is, the supervisor must provide concrete suggestions and advice (McNeill & Stoltenberg, 2016). To elicit trainees' awareness, catalytic interventions are recommended for trainees. This is when the supervisor proves or raises issues in key areas of counseling. Once this level is perceived as completed the supervision takes a different tone in which the trainee continues to benefit from facilitative interventions but can conceptualize clients' issues and are able to handle confrontational interventions in counseling.

Further, in using IDM in triad supervision for counselors in training at YGS, it is suggested that trainees take turns during the supervision sessions. Utilizing the aspect of split-focus in which the supervision time is divided among the two trainees dividing the supervision time in two will allow trainees to express every time supervision occurs (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Smith, 2009).

### **Hierarchy and Evaluation: Aspects of Effective Supervision**

Because supervision has an evaluative function, meaning that the relationship is hierarchical in nature, evaluation of trainees' developmental competence is pivotal for confirmation of not only effective supervision but the assertiveness of professional growth (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). As mentioned earlier, when using the IDM in supervision it is important to determine the trainee's developmental level as this will determine supervision strategies

along with planning of appropriate assessment of skills (Stoltenberg et al., 2014; Stoltenberg et al., 1998). For the purpose of providing effective supervision for trainees at YGS Placement Services and in consideration of the education level and training exposure (Level 1) according to the IDM, it is recommended to begin with the administration the following scales. (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; McNeill et al., 1992). Further, it is recommended to re-administer the scales at the culmination of the supervision phase in order to note progress in counselor-trainee development.

Counselor-trainee IDM developmental levels will be assessed using the Supervisee Levels Questionnaire-Revised (SLQ-R; McNeill et al., 1992). The SLQ-R is to attempt to address the need for reliable, valid assessment procedures for identifying a trainee's level of development. This instrument has 30 items divided in three subscales, the Self and Other Awareness, Motivation, and Dependence-Autonomy subscales that indicate reliability estimates of .83, .74, .64, and .88 (McNeill et al., 1992). McNeill et al. (1992) conducted a study to evaluate the construct validity of the SLQ-R and results indicated some degree of validity and reliability associated with the IDM of supervision.

Counselor competency levels will be rated by the supervisor using the Counseling Competency Scale (CCS) (Eriksen & McAuliffe, 2003; Lambi et al., 2018). This scale is the product of revisions of an existing scale. Authors solicited feedback from experts and a focus group. A comparison of beginning counselors-in-training with those who had completed a counseling skills course was conducted. The item analysis indicated that a paired t test showed significant improvements in counseling skills ( $t = 4.51$ ,  $p < .000$ ) from pretest to posttest. Cronbach's alpha showed internal consistency to be .90 (Eriksen & McAuliffe, 2003).

Aside from administering the above scales, the supervisor will prescribe reflective journaling for critical thinking; this will facilitate topics of interest as well as ongoing assessment of each trainee during the supervision sessions. Each trainee will have an opportunity on a weekly basis to express their experiences and concerns regarding the previous week. In a study to explore how reflective journaling develops critical thinking, results indicated that individual learning took place as well. Two major descriptive themes emerged indicating that the development of critical thinking is a process that develops over time and that purposefully engaging in critical thinking may help prevent clients' dissatisfaction with vocational counseling (Zori, 2016).

## Discussion

Effective supervision for trainees at YGS Placement Services agency is vital for the benefit of their clients and the trainees' professional growth. The IDM of supervision using a triadic format offers the best option due to the similarity in developmental levels of trainees employed. YGS would benefit from this type of supervision as trainees will be able to learn from each other and would be able to peer supervise in case they need. The ongoing assessment through reflective journal discussions will benefit both trainees as they will share insights of their caseloads and individual perceptions, different perspectives, and experiences. Further, the administration of SLQ-R and CCS scales will partly be the force that will facilitate topics of discussion in sessions and be the final tools for the evaluative closing of supervision (Eriksen & McAuliffe, 2003; Lambi et al., 2018)

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**Author Note:**

All correspondence for this article should be addressed to Viviana Garza, School of Rehabilitation Services and Counseling, University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley, 1201 West University Drive, Edinburg, TX 78539, Email: [Lssp1004@gmail.com](mailto:Lssp1004@gmail.com)